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## THE CRAYON.

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 19, 1855.

THE Editors of THE CRAYON would not have it understood that they endorse the extracts they make from books or papers in all cases. The opinions of men are often given as matter of interest, although THE CRAYON might dissent entirely from them.

In order to distinguish between the communications by artists and those non-artistic, the former will, hereafter, in all cases, be signed in black letter, the latter, as usual, in Roman capitals.

We should be obliged to our weekly exchanges if they would place us on the footing of the monthlies in the matter of notices.

REV. LUCIUS CRANDALL is authorized to travel and obtain subscriptions for THE CRAYON.

We shall omit our usual leader until the warm weather shall have passed, and enabled us to return to the regular exercise of our powers of thought, and shall at the same time endeavor to give our readers more light reading, fitting for the weather. In the fearful heat to which we are subjected in the city, it is often impossible to perform any severe mental labor, and we presume equally difficult for our readers to labor through it.

## Sketching.

[From the Leader.]

OUR poetical correspondent sends us the following, which we commend to our friends of THE CRAYON. The writer, being an artist by profession, is of course a subscriber to and admirer of our Art Journal. It is really a very interesting periodical, but in the theory of the *genesis* of Art we do not agree with it, though the editorial columns often contain fine *bap-hazard* things that point the right way, and show that the writers might easily get upon the true track. The communication of our correspondent expresses our theory, negative and positive, with more felicity than we could do it ourselves; and it chimes in exactly with the purpose of the *Leader*, to show the connection between true supernatural religion and a true theory of Art.

Few things could be more happily expressed than some of the closing sentences of this piece: they contain a world of art-philosophy in a very small compass. It was suggested, we may add, by an article in THE CRAYON. "It may not suit you," our correspondent adds, in an accompanying note; "it may not be correct; but the writer in THE CRAYON whined so hopelessly about people not admiring Nature, that I could not or would not keep from writing it."

## IMPERFECTION IN NATURE.

There has been much written of the beauty of Nature; of her truth, her majesty, her "infinite variety;" and if we consider solely those who have no appreciation of her wonders, who are blindly busy accumulating wealth, who—as the "peasant poet" has said—

"Darkly grub this earthly hole in low pursuit:"

if we consider these alone, there has not been written one word too much.

But there are others, not insensible to the charms of Nature, to whom this worship of her, this excessive devotion and praise—as if she held the perfection of all things—seems much overdone. In the youth of the soul, Nature promises great things; she allures by her magic coloring, her forms, her lights and shades, the numberless gradations of gloom and brightness, until, in the glow of enthusiasm, we believe devoutly that she can give us all she hints at, all that we can ask for. Then landscapes charm us, and fields and woods, rivers, oceans and skies ravish our material minds with their material beauty. But later, let us scrutinize her closely, we shall find she is but a beautiful

cheat. We shall find that there is very little completeness in her work, very little perfection in her productions. There is scarcely a leaf that we may not discover some flaw in, or if a perfect one be found, there will be a worm eating at it. Climbing roses have no smell, fragrant ones do not climb, and neither of them has evergreen foliage. We can imagine a finer flower than Nature has ever produced. Her most beautifully colored birds have no song, and the tuneful ones are dressed in sober plumes. Many poisonous plants are beautiful to the eye, and medicinal ones are common looking. The most beautiful women, for the most part, are heartless, while they with homely features have a store of unexpected love; in short, Nature is full of deceit.

Take her in her larger aspects, she cannot be depended upon any more than in particulars. The finest landscape in the world will have something in it which the judicious artist will omit; some mean streak, some object which may be even outwardly beautiful—the snake, for instance—but which carries or suggests some damning quality from which our moral nature shrinks.

Look at the sunset! Let the west burn in gold and crimson, let the majestic clouds, like a mighty multitude with glowing faces, look into that furnace, how long will it last? Is it not like necromancy? And, except as a comparison to something in the soul of man, is it worth anything? There is not one in a thousand sunsets that an artist would choose to paint, if he could, *just as it is*.

In truth, there are two sides to this question; the beautiful one may be dwelt upon and presented to the worldly man, and haply may wean him a little from the dusty ways of gain and traffic; but the full-grown soul, tired of mere green trees and blue skies, will demand a beauty which is eternal, a perfection that will not fade; and it will be well for that soul to see the imperfect side of Nature, and cease to expect from her an answer to that demand. For, if Nature be taken for herself, or for anything more than a suggestion of the eternal beauty, a means will have been mistaken for an end. More beautiful, though debased and weakened, than all the surrounding material wonders, is that power in man, the residue of his ancient inheritance—that can imagine an absolute beauty which he never saw; that power of selecting and presenting what is comparatively free from imperfection out of the scattered elements of imperfect Nature; that divine power of combination, unknown and superior to Nature, that can people the abyss with demons, and fill the splendor of the heavens with seraphim.

There certainly is a point from which all things that God has made, are beautiful; and there was a time when man occupied that position, but he lost it with his innocence and Paradise.

BERNARD.

What "Bernard" means in the above, we do not know that we clearly understand. While seeming to object to the tone of THE CRAYON with reference to the subject treated of, it admits each and every position it has taken. Certain positions he assumes, we are, however, by no means disposed to endorse. "Nature is a beautiful cheat"—for a droll reason—because "there is very little completeness in her work, very little perfection in her productions." But why thence a "cheat?" Has she made pretensions to more than she is? Is not imperfection openly marked on everything earthly? Yet the Creator saw that all things which he had made were good. Take a twig with leaves from the nearest tree, friend Bernard, and when you have clearly ascertained that every leaf on it except

one is imperfect, and that that one has a worm eating it; when you are entirely satisfied that there is nothing perfect about it, look at it as a whole, its play of light and shade, its multitude of graceful forms, and the artless grouping of the leaves, thrown this way and that by the wonderful playfulness of this cheat Nature—the curves and angles of each minor twiglet; and more, the exceeding variety produced by the individual imperfections of the leaves of which you complain, and when you have comprehended it in its full beauty, see if you can invent or "imagine" anything nearer perfect than that twig is as a whole. We rather think it would puzzle you. You are an artist—well! will you demonstrate your capability to imagine a finer flower than a moss rose, a white lily, or a morning glory?—no, set yourself at work to outshine a dandelion. We recollect trying it once when we had finished a flower-piece, and the result was a dingy, graceless, trumpet-shaped affair—we wouldn't thank the gardener to produce a nameless quantity of such seedlings. Why should a fragrant rose climb? Would it be more beautiful? And, if so, we should probably have henceforth but one kind of rose, and if it were evergreen beside, it would banish all other climbing shrubs, and we should become as weary of roses as of May-flowers. Why, the sublimest law of perfection is, that to each individual is given a diverse office, and the end of its creation is to fill that office perfectly, not to combine all conceivable functions. Go back to our twig again and trim every leaf to the perfect ideal, tint every discolored spot to the healthy color of Nature, supply omissions and prune superfluities—and, when you have done, mark what a tame, stupid, lifeless thing you have made of the beautiful twig Nature gave you. It is like a model community, every member of which is a model being, perfect, and capable of filling adequately any office in the society—no one being able to do one thing better than another. Why, the very angels in heaven have their different functions, outside of which they are imperfect. How else shall society cohere than through individual imperfection and individual want consequent, or how shall we appreciate the ideal, except by comparison with the removes from it? If the plain bird had no song, we should forget it, and half the feathered race would be made for no pleasure to us. You may not choose to paint a sunset *just as it is*, but can you imagine anything in the same line finer, as a whole, than sunsets you have seen? Or will you build one up by line and rule, and make it perfect as you would a house?

It is well that Bernard admits that there are two sides to the question, but you must see one side before you can the other, and the one which all men must see first is the earthly side. When the "soul is full grown," and "tired of mere green trees and blue skies," we shall not attempt to prescribe a course of æsthetic study for it. Its studies will be found in another state. But until the veil is lifted, it is well for us to contemplate such a Nature as is given us here, being well assured that it is good if we

will only draw good from it, dwelling on the beauty it contains, and not arresting our progress over diseased and imperfect manifestations, and this is "the point from which all things that God has made are beautiful." We may be well assured that knowledge and love of Him includes knowledge and love of all His works, and that the earthly forms of them are parts of the great chain. Can we suppose that this nature was given us to regard, and that we were given the perception and enjoyment of the beauty in it, without a definite purpose? And if liberty and capacity are given, is there not implied an obligation with regard to their proper occupation?

But farther, what other knowledge have men of "the eternal beauty" than that which they receive through the temporal and imperfect beauty? and what "ancient inheritance" which gives man the power of creating a new order of things, and a new type of beauty? Why, you may imagine a thousand things, and yet if in all that thousand you can find one which is unnatural, it will be a monstrosity, "a demon," and a shape like those of the images of a nightmare or *mania a potu*; everything beautiful and heavenly will bear the impress of memory—will be the elevation of images seen here. There is no such "power of combination" in man as Bernard supposes, unknown to Nature, and superior to her. The imagination is the only creative power, and that works by the laws learned from the study of the physical universe. Every true student of Nature "has early ceased to expect from her an answer to that demand" for absolute perfection, yet has, at the same time, learned to regard every one of her manifestations as indices to that perfection, and whose infinite pointing from myriad points to one centre, mark the place of that perfection as surely as a treasure-seeker's lines do by their crossing the place where the gold was laid.

#### RACHEL.

THE Rachel representations continue to attract numerous and appreciative audiences, owing, doubtless, to the press, for everything that could be done by newspapers to render the plays intelligible has been done. Emotions have been analyzed, plots dissected, fine passages pointed out, the literary merits of the plays have been criticised, and the best criticisms, French and English, have been given to the public in order to facilitate the enjoyment of the performances. The only fault we have to find with many of these analyses is, that much twaddle has been intermingled with them, thereby rendering them confusing to the reader, and of unnecessary length. There has been a great deal said about the prices of admission, and it has called forth a card from the manager, Mr. Raphael Felix, which, in our judgment, is a very reasonable statement of the facts of the case. The prices of admission here are less than they were in England, and if not so low as in Paris, his reason for it—that the government contributes to support the theatre by an annual appropria-

tion, which enables the management to open its doors at lower rates—is a good and sufficient one. Prices should be higher here where the expenses are double.

We must add, however, that the rate of admission is too high for the purses of appreciative visitors. They are not the wealthy who love art the most, or who lead the masses to applaud it in this country, but, on the contrary, the discriminating few whose hearty applause inside, and enthusiastic tongues outside, control opinion, and "do the business" for the managers. We believe, therefore, that Monsieur Felix would make twice the amount of money if he could enable this class to come with tickets at the price of one dollar than he will with the present rates. The obstacle of the language is a very unimportant one. We find those who do not understand French care nothing about it, they understand the universal language of expression, and Rachel in this language is incomparably great. We advise everybody, however, no matter what the prices of admission are, to see Rachel. Her performances are unexceptionable as far as the usual objections to the theatre exist, and they are an exhibition of artistic genius such as the present generation may never witness again.

**AMERICAN INSTITUTE.**—This society has taken the Crystal Palace for its annual exhibition this year, with the intention, we are informed, of purchasing the building, in case it is found to be a desirable location for its purposes. Its exhibition this year professes some new features; it is intended to be a *Fair* in reality—a place where goods, machinery, &c., can not only be exhibited, but where they can be purchased and sold, deposited and taken away at the pleasure of the owners. The Institute proposes to add to the attractions of the Fair, a gallery of works of Art, containing such pictures, statuary, &c., as they may be able to procure. Artists and others possessing such works are requested to contribute, and to notify the Institute, No. 351 Broadway, of any works they may be disposed to send to the Fair, before the last week of the present month. The Fair will open about the 3d October.

#### BOOK NOTICES.

*Oakfield* is an entertaining book. It belongs to the class of novels (so numerous at the present time, and of such powerful influence) which expose social errors and evils—that show one half the world how the other half lives—made up, generally, of an author's experiences or actual observation, and, therefore, the more interesting. This work is written by a son of Dr. Arnold. It reveals the secrets of social life in the military world of India, and to the throngs of English youth who desire to go to India, and do go there, we should think it might prove as beneficial as "*Two Years before the Mast*" was to a similar class in our own country—those, we mean, who entertained a passion for the sea, but whose ardor was cooled down considerably by the publication of that book. Published, in good style, by Ticknor & Fields, Boston.

MESSRS. GOUPI & Co. have on exhibition Ary Scheffer's picture of Dante and Beatrice. We have three separate reasons for rejoicing every time we look at this fine work of Art—first, that such pictures are painted; second, that it belongs to an owner resident in the country, and thirdly, that the public has the privilege of seeing it. The picture belongs to Chas. C. Perkins, Esq., of Boston, and we congratulate him upon being its possessor.

We extract the following bits from *The Independent*, where they may be found, associated with other pleasant thoughts, in a familiar letter by Henry Ward Beecher, entitled "The Mountain Farm to the Sea-side Farm":—

Home should be an oratorio of the memory, singing to all our after-life melodies and harmonies of old remembered joy!

I do not mean a narrow-faced house in the city, reaching wearily toward the zenith, with perpendicular stairs, cruel and perilous to much-enduring women; but a real substantial country home, where they may smell the earth, walk upon carpets of pasture and meadow, that forever laugh at the patterns of the loom! May they hear great trees—let them be elm trees—sing and pray all day and night above their heads! May they grow in love with crooked brooks winking at you from silver pebbles, with tufted willows and tasseled alders, with orchards and birds, with all insects, with grasses, flowers, rushes and reeds; with flags and the stately cat-tail—Stop! There is a brilliant humming-bird singing with his wings at the mouth of our honeysuckle blossoms, just come for his morning draught. Beautiful fellow! you are the first at that bouquet! None have emptied the nectar. The cups are full of untasted sweets. See! The flowers do not even quiver as he sounds their depths, so skilled is he to hang poised before them and carry his long bill to the very hidden seat of honey. No table is to be spread for thee, no dishes cleaned after thy meal, no servants run to serve thee, no chimney reeks for thine appetite. There is not a fly or moth the less for thy feeding; no seeds are plucked out of the feathery cells. God calleth thee by the voice of flowers, and thou art served with cups more rare than ever Cellini carved for the Medici. Up springs the little winged jewel, and forsaking the honeysuckle, he hangs right before my window, eyeing me with his long eye, as if pitying me for not being a humming-bird! And surely I should like to have a merry bout with you through the air, glancing through the trees, searching all odorous places, living upon flower-digested dew. And yet, sucking floral nectar, and wheeling through sun-flashes must be but an empty life! Good for an hour, but not for a life; yet, nobler natures there are that do less than that for life. But perhaps my pen attracts him. He has a fit of literature. Ah, sir, if it were Longfellow's, Bryant's, or Tennyson's pen, you might well suck rare honey from the quill. Mine, I fear, would be a little acid and somewhat bitter! He is gone. He did not fly but flashed away!

As I looked forth, the air spake peace. The distant trees stood in peace. The green mountains abode at rest. I saw shadows cast blackly down upon them, and traverse their hollowed sides and ridged tops. But they peacefully bore the blot, and let them pass unrebuted away. The shadows of storms do not hurt the mountains; nor do the shadows of slander or untruth harm men. And so I looked across the sloping lawn, and saw the tranquil lake, nursing in its bosom all the fenced farms that lie upon its thither side, and all around the horizon stood the silent mountains; and above them all,

mighty outstretched, the blue and gray dome of sky. All thoughts of conflict forsook me. Shall I be turmoiled in behalf of things which will never lose their own peace? They know their strength, and when storms rail they never answer back again. They know their worth of beauty, and neither boast nor defend it. They abide in stillness.

But tell me, what have you instead of mountains? All around us, on every side, stand innumerable piles, tree-clad, rock-built, carved and scarped along their slopes by ages of rain. Rain! whose soft architectural hands have power to cut stones and chisel to shapes of grandeur the very mountains as no artist could ever do! On their tops clouds love to walk or brood. The hills stand waiting for us in the morning, with their sides draped with mistlace, wrought in mighty convolutions and patterns, such as royalty could never command, from Mechlin and Vallenciennes. In a few hours they are folded and laid away in that great wardrobe above, from which such rare and endless dresses are drawn by the subtle hand of Nature. In these moutains are dells and gorges, caves and chasms, brooks and their loud-crying torrents. There are forests that sing to themselves their grand old songs night and day, and none hears but God, into whose ear comes, doubtless, every sound of earth—the murmur of leaves and the chanting of reeds, the whisper of grass-blades, and the very silence of flowers, as well as the voices of human sorrow and thunder of the city! And then the afternoon and evening phantasins of the hills! Who shall speak the nameless hues which the atmosphere spreads upon the evening hills in mountain regions? What fleet upon your ocean ever fills the eye as do the cloud fleets the ethereal ocean in these mountain regions? There go very continents, not anchored like Europe or the Americas, but sailing quietly with all their mountains and valleys. Only think of the Alps, some fine morning, starting off upon a tour of the continent! The Apennines, the Andes, old Chimborazo, or the Himalayas, out upon a tour! Yet, there they are, as sure as you have fancy in your eye, parading the heavens, and sunning their fiery peaks above old Grey-lock, or flashing the afternoon light with such dazzling whiteness that the eye can hardly look upon them!

We take pleasure in giving currency to the following, believing that the native genius which provides for an agricultural necessity, is kindred, if it be not a forerunner, to such genius as will yet provide for higher and more spiritual necessities—which necessities, when equally understood by the masses, will call into being the noblest works of Art:—

The great and final trial of Agricultural Implements gathered at the World's Exhibition of Industry, now in progress in Paris, came off on August 13, at La Trippes, thirty miles from Paris, upon the farm of Mr. Dailly, Postmaster-General of France. Previous partial trials had awakened such a general interest in the occasion, that Prince Napoleon, and many of the highest officers of State, went out from Paris; while about twenty distinguished Americans, including ex-President Fillmore, Senator Tombs of Georgia, Mr. Corcoran, the Washington banker, and others equally eminent, were on the ground to cheer on their countrymen, and to rejoice with them in the final result. Various implements were tested, but the great interest of the day was centered in the Threshers and Reapers, especially in the latter.

In the trial of Threshers, which lasted only 30 minutes, six men were set to work with flails, and at the same time with the best French, English, and Belgian machines, and Pitt's American Thrasher, with the following result:—

Six men with flails . . . . .	60 liters of wheat
Pinet's Belgian Thrasher . . . . .	150 liters "
Dunoir's French Thrasher . . . . .	250 " "
Clayton's English Thrasher . . . . .	410 " "
Pitt's American Thrasher . . . . .	740 " "

This is in nearly the ratio of 1—2½—4—7—12½, making the American machine to do the work of 74 men; or of 5 Belgian machines; or of more than 3 French machines, and nearly double that of the best English machines. The *Moniteur*, the leading journal of France, says, “The American Thrasher gained the honors of the day.” \* \* \* “It literally devoured the sheaves of wheat.” \* \* \* “It is frightful to look at,” &c.

Seven Reapers—three American, two English, and two French—were entered. Previous trials had scared all others from coming upon the ground.

About an acre was allotted to each machine, and they all started at the tap of the drum. The poorest American machine finished the plot in a little more than half the time required by the best European machines. The time occupied was

By McCormick's (operated by McKenzie) 10½ minutes
By Manny's (from Illinois) . . . . . 16 "
By Hussey's (Wright's improvement) . . . . . 18 "

The European machines came out in from 30 to 90 minutes. No incident could have been more pleasing to Americans than to have seen ex-President Fillmore mounted upon a shock of wheat, the most interested and excited spectator upon the field. It argues well for the future of agriculture, when our politicians of the highest class enter with so much spirit into occasions like this. We hope to see many such manifestations of interest in farm improvements, during our great annual exhibitions now about to open at home.

The trial of mowers resulted in a similar triumph of American skill. The French machines will henceforth be superseded, and their patents worthless.

In pianos, the American instruments are also foremost. This circumstance puzzles the French most of all. They were somewhat prepared for being excelled in the heavy agricultural implements, but how the Americans—half-civilized as they esteem us—should successfully compete with more than three hundred fine French pianos, is beyond their comprehension. In their simplicity, they had supposed that they had furnished most of the pianos to this country, and, indeed, all of the good instruments of this kind. Some of our countrymen, and women, too, who have attached so much value to foreign manufacturers, will have their obtuse vision sharpened. These results will do more than a thousand tariffs to develop and foster American manufactures.—*American Agriculturist*.

We translate a few items of interest from a French review of a work called “Souvenirs of a Journey in Siberia,” by a Swedish traveller named Christopher Hansteen.

The traveller visited the encampment of the Kirsiges, one of the Siberian tribes. He was conducted with his companions to a house belonging to an uncle of the Khan, Tschuke Nuraleitsch, who made them take a seat upon a carpet by his side, on which he sat cross-legged à la Turk. He offered them tea and pipes; and on their requesting it, he called for and introduced them to his two daughters and a daughter-in-law. As soon however as the women entered the tent, he hastened to withdraw. Mr. Hansteen did not comprehend his motive for going out, but a few days time revealed it. One of his travelling companions having expressed a desire to take the portrait of the daughter-in-law of Tschuke Nuraleitsch, and having requested the latter to act as interpreter at the

sittings, the Khan's uncle excused himself, saying, that he had never seen the face of his daughter-in-law, and that it was not permitted for his eyes to rest upon it. Among the Kirsiges, a young woman cannot show her face to any male of the family older than herself, her father excepted, whilst an elderly woman can do so to a man younger than herself without impropriety. According to this custom, a father-in-law may not look upon the face of his son's wife, the wife of his nephew, or that of his younger brother, but can see the face of his aunt, and so on. The violation of this strange custom would bring serious consequences upon the offender. Once, however, a Kirsige, Nuraleitsch himself, came near transgressing this law. The Emperor Nicholas had invited him, as well as his nephew the Khan Dschanger, and the wife of the latter, to be present at the ceremony of his coronation, which took place in 1826. They had to be presented to the Czar, and all three at once. How could it be imagined? Their embarrassment was great, for according to their native custom, an uncle could not see the face of his nephew's wife. It was finally arranged in this way. Fatima entered the audience chamber, her face concealed by a thick white veil, accompanied both by her uncle and husband. At the moment when Nicholas approached the group Fatima raised her veil, while Nuraleitsch turned himself around, and placed himself back to back with his niece, then lowering her veil as soon as the Emperor had finished speaking with her, Nuraleitsch was permitted to advance, and in his turn to offer his felicitations to the Czar.

The travellers perceive by the severity of the cold, that they are truly in Siberia. At Tobolsk they assist at a baptismal ceremony. It is well known that in the Russian-Greek church a baptism is administered not by sprinkling but by immersion. The priest takes the naked infant upon his right hand, and extends his left hand over the face, so as to stop one ear with the end of his thumb, and the other ear with the extremity of the little finger, the eyes with the ends of the fore and middle fingers, and the nose and mouth with the palm of the hand; then having thus closed every opening by which the fluid can enter, he plunges the little creature three times into water that must not be warmed by any artificial means. Upon certain occasions the clergy proceed in state to the environs of the town, in order to sanctify the water of the river. A hole is made in the ice, into which the archbishop or his substitute places the cross. Immediately every body crowds to collect the water that overflows upon the surface. If there happens to be in the vicinity a new-born child, it is brought out, and one of the two priests causes it to undergo the triple immersion in the manner we have just described. The poor infant comes out in a state easily to be imagined; happy, however, to have escaped at all, for, says M. Hansteen, the priests are almost always intoxicated, and they sometimes suffer the infant to drop in, and thus baptism becomes for the little creature an extreme unction.

#### FOREIGN ART GOSSIP.

MR. BELL's statue of Walpole was placed on its pedestal in St. Stephen's Hall, on Saturday last. It is a fine figure; and presents the burly statesman with an expression of that powerful superciliousness which characterized his face, his mind, and his system of government. This statue is the seventh now erected; three other commissions are in hand. Mr. Baily is working at the model of Fox. Mr. Macdowell is engaged upon Chatham—nearly finished, we believe—and Pitt. Two more commissions are yet to be distributed.—*Athenæum*.

THE newspapers of yesterday report the sudden death of Mr. Patrick Park, the portrait-sculptor, at Warrington.—*Athenæum*.